

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 3.951

eligible, and the right to burial in a national cemetery is restored.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6105(a))

[27 FR 8591, Aug. 28, 1962, as amended at 38 FR 30106, Nov. 1, 1973; 39 FR 13970, Apr. 19, 1974; 53 FR 16924, May 19, 1988]

§ 3.905 Declaration of forfeiture or remission of forfeiture.

(a) *Jurisdiction.* At the regional office level, except in VA Regional Office, Manila, Philippines, the Regional Counsel is authorized to determine whether the evidence warrants formal consideration as to forfeiture. In the Manila Regional Office the Adjudication Officer is authorized to make this determination. Submissions may also be made by the director of a service, the Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals, and the General Counsel. Jurisdiction to determine whether the claimant or payee has forfeited the right to gratuitous benefits or to remit a prior forfeiture is vested in the Director, Compensation and Pension Service, and personnel to whom authority has been delegated under the provisions of § 3.100(c).

(b) *Fraud or treasonable acts.* Forfeiture of benefits under § 3.901 or § 3.902 will not be declared until the person has been notified by the Regional Counsel or, in VA Regional Office, Manila, Philippines, the Adjudication Officer, of the right to present a defense. Such notice shall consist of a written statement sent to the person's latest address of record setting forth the following:

(1) The specific charges against the person;

(2) A detailed statement of the evidence supporting the charges, subject to regulatory limitations on disclosure of information;

(3) Citation and discussion of the applicable statute;

(4) The right to submit a statement or evidence within 60 days, either to rebut the charges or to explain the person's position;

(5) The right to a hearing within 60 days, with representation by counsel of the person's own choosing, that fees for the representation are limited in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5904(c) and that no expenses incurred by a claimant, counsel or witness will be paid by VA.

(c) *Subversive activities.* Automatic forfeiture of benefits under § 3.903 will be effectuated by an official authorized to declare a forfeiture as provided in paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) *Finality of decisions.* A decision of forfeiture is subject to the provisions of § 3.104(a) and §§ 20.1103 and 20.1104 of this chapter. The officials authorized to file administrative appeals and the time limit for filing such appeals are set forth in § 19.51 of this chapter.

(e) *Remission of forfeiture.* In event of remission of forfeiture under § 3.901(e), any amounts paid as an apportionment(s) during periods of the previously forfeited beneficiary's reentitlement will be offset.

[28 FR 2234, Mar. 7, 1963, as amended at 29 FR 7547, June 12, 1964; 37 FR 19134, Sept. 19, 1972; 39 FR 13970, Apr. 19, 1974; 53 FR 17934, May 19, 1988; 58 FR 32443, June 10, 1993]

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates; forfeiture. See § 3.400(m). Reductions and discontinuances; fraud. See § 3.500(k). Reductions and discontinuances; treasonable acts or subversive activities. See § 3.500(s). Adjustments and resumptions. See § 3.669. Burial benefits. See § 3.1609.

PROTECTION

§ 3.950 Helpless children; Spanish-American and prior wars.

Marriage is not a bar to the payment of pension or compensation to a helpless child under an award approved prior to April 1, 1944. The presumption, arising from the fact of marriage, that helplessness has ceased may be overcome by positive proof of continuing helplessness. As to awards approved on or after April 1, 1944, pension or compensation may not be paid to a helpless child who has married.

[26 FR 1608, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.951 Preservation of disability ratings.

(a) A readjustment to the Schedule for Rating Disabilities shall not be grounds for reduction of a disability rating in effect on the date of the readjustment unless medical evidence establishes that the disability to be evaluated has actually improved.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

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(b) A disability which has been continuously rated at or above any evaluation of disability for 20 or more years for compensation purposes under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs will not be reduced to less than such evaluation except upon a showing that such rating was based on fraud. Likewise, a rating of permanent total disability for pension purposes which has been in force for 20 or more years will not be reduced except upon a showing that the rating was based on fraud. The 20-year period will be computed from the effective date of the evaluation to the effective date of reduction of evaluation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 110)

[34 FR 11970, July 16, 1969, as amended at 57 FR 10426, Mar. 26, 1992]

§ 3.952 Protected ratings.

Ratings under the Schedule of Disability Ratings, 1925, which were the basis of compensation on April 1, 1946, are subject to modification only when a change in physical or mental condition would have required a reduction under the 1925 schedule, or an increased evaluation has been assigned under the Schedule for Rating Disabilities, 1945 (looseleaf edition), after which time all evaluations will be under the 1945 schedule (loose-leaf edition) only. Such increased evaluations must be of an other than temporary nature (due to hospitalization, surgery, etc.). When a temporary evaluation is involved, the 1925 schedule evaluation will be restored after the period of increase has elapsed unless the permanent residuals would have required reduction under that schedule, or unless an increased evaluation would be assignable under a 1945 schedule (looseleaf edition) rating. In any instance where the changed condition represents an increased degree of disability under either rating schedule but the evaluation provided by the 1945 schedule (looseleaf edition) is less than the evaluation in effect under the 1925 schedule on April 1, 1946, the 1925 schedule evaluation and award are protected.

[26 FR 12766, Dec. 30, 1961]

38 CFR Ch. I (7-1-02 Edition)

§ 3.953 Pub. L. 85-56 and Pub. L. 85-857.

(a) *In receipt of or entitled to receive benefits on December 31, 1958.* Any person receiving or entitled to receive benefits under any public law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs on December 31, 1958, may, except where there was fraud, clear and unmistakable error of fact or law, or misrepresentation of material facts, continue to receive such benefits as long as the conditions warranting such payment under those laws continue. The greater benefit under the previous law or the corresponding section of title 38 U.S.C., will be paid in the absence of an election to receive the lesser benefit.

(Authority: Section 10, Pub. L. 85-857)

(b) *Emergency officers' retirement pay.* Any person who was receiving, or entitled to receive, emergency officers' retirement pay, or other privileges or benefits as a retired emergency officer of World War I, on December 31, 1958, under the laws in effect on that day, will, except where there was fraud, clear and unmistakable error as to conclusion of fact or law, or misrepresentation of material facts, continue to receive, or be entitled to receive, emergency officers' retirement pay at the rate otherwise payable on December 31, 1958, and such other privileges and benefits, so long as the conditions warranting such pay, privileges, and benefits under those laws continue.

(Authority: Section 11, Pub. L. 85-857)

(c) *Service connection established under prior laws.* In the absence of fraud, misrepresentation of material facts or clear and unmistakable error, all cases where compensation was payable on December 31, 1957, for disability service connected under prior laws, repealed by Pub. L. 85-56, including those service connected under the second proviso of section 200 of the World War Veterans' Act, 1924, as amended, are protected by section 2316(b), Pub. L. 85-56 and section 10, Pub. L. 85-857 as to both service connection and rate of compensation, so long as the conditions warranting such status and rate continue. Any disability so service connected may be